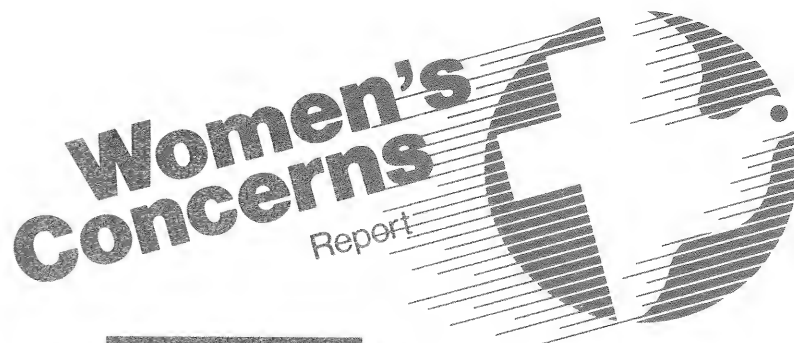


- Report No. 68
- September-October 1986



Women Resisting Injustice

Through this *Report* you will meet ten faithful women. You may already be familiar with some of them—in the past several years their names have appeared in short news items in Mennonite periodicals announcing arrests, court decisions or even prison sentences.

Such activities have not been common for us women. Few of our Sunday school teachers, pastors or parents knowingly prepared us for the resistance road. Nevertheless we find ourselves on this path—and on it we receive encouragement from one another. I certainly have been greatly strengthened and inspired in compiling this issue. In beginning the project I had the names of only five women and admit to feeling discouraged. But the women I contacted told me of others; soon I was surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.

Some of the writers are full-time justice/resistance workers; others interpret their work through a grid of justice. The range of issues is as varied as their lives and the lives that touch theirs.

Although a high school teacher, I also count myself as a justice worker. I teach in a small (60 students), community-run alternative high school for Hispanic dropouts in our neighborhood. In the classroom I've been able to introduce numerous justice issues, and occasionally students join me in justice actions outside of school. As a member of a Voluntary Service unit, the money I earn from teaching helps support two unit members who are full-time justice workers in SYNAPSES here in Chicago.

As MCC workers in Southern Africa my husband and I were asked, "What will you do when you go home? How will you help our struggle?" Those questions pushed us to active involvement in divestment work. Also our family joined the Pledge of Resistance; therefore our 5-year-old is no stranger to public demonstrations of protest against our government's involvement in Central America (and has been overheard teaching her playmates solidarity chants).

It is, however, still hard to understand why first her daddy and later her mommy were locked up for "doing good things."

My justice work makes even more sense when I think of my daughter and all the children she represents for me. Mothers and daughters, sisters all—sisters faithful to our God as well as to our sisters and their families around the world.

The women who wrote for this *Report* did so in the hope that their stories would be an encouragement to all of us. They also welcome us to encourage them and pray for them in their calling to work for justice and resist evil. In that spirit, their addresses are included.—Joan Gerig

Joan Gerig, a member of the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns, lives at 1749 West 21st Street, Chicago, Ill. 60608.

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Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.
—Hebrews 12: 1-3

By Kris Chupp

In For the Long Haul

It all started when I was 5 years old. A missionary from Africa periodically spoke in chapel at my school. This small, white-haired woman was indeed an inspiration to me. My understanding of “mission work” has changed since then, but from all my years of evangelical Christian schooling I have kept a deep commitment to a life of service to God and a sense of community—of accepting and caring for one another.

Much of my evolution into the justice/resistance work I now do has been a quest to learn and define what these two things mean. During college (Bethel), helping to start a house church showed me that creating new models for community is possible. Bible and theology classes opened up the social, political and economic contexts of the Biblical material and challenged me to serve the poor.

The next chapter took me to the city. I figured I had better find out more about my own social/political/economic context if I was to understand what “serving the poor” meant in my time. In Chicago at the Urban Life Center I learned about urban poverty and ministry: how resources are intentionally drained from poor and minority neighborhoods, why infant mortality rates are so much higher for Blacks in this country, about the deeply entrenched economic roots of racism. As the myths fell away, I began to see our society through the eyes of its victims and realized that responsible ministry should address the structural issues of justice.

I worked at a childcare center in Chicago for a couple of years. Helping to shape children’s experiences seemed like a worthwhile and hopeful thing to do.

During that time I began to hear more about the situation of the poor in Central America, and I got a chance to go

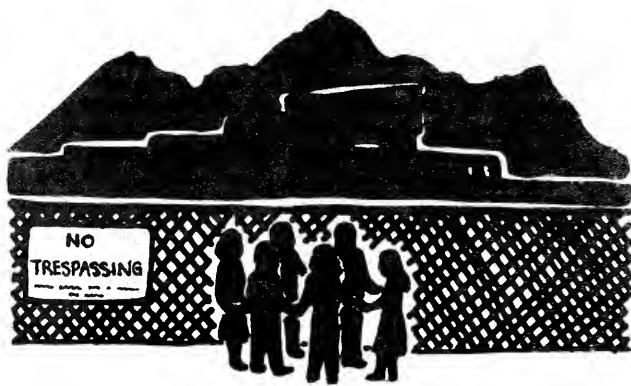
to Honduras and Nicaragua for a month. The stories I heard from farmers and refugees made it clear that the U.S. government, pockets loaded with its citizens’ tax dollars, maintains control over Central American resources. I carried home the voices of Central Americans saying, “Please tell your people the truth about our lives. If they only know the truth they will understand and will tell your government to stop sending weapons to kill us.”

I’m almost 27 now and since 1983 have worked as a full-time volunteer with SYNAPSES, a Chicago-based, interfaith justice education and action network. In the past year we have become very involved in the Pledge of Resistance, taking our voices to the streets and putting our bodies on the line (and sometimes in jail) to oppose our government’s immoral and unjust policies in Central America. Much of my work focuses on organizing for this resistance.

I’ve come to realize we’re in this struggle for the long haul. I’m part of a long-term Voluntary Service unit for support. I’m also part of a dispersed group of folks who covenant together and support each other as we weave together the threads of spirituality, Biblical study and social justice action in our lives—all integral to a sustained “life of service.”

Felipe, a catechist (lay minister) fled Guatemala with his family after 17 of his co-workers were killed by the military for teaching villagers to read. I remember him saying as I drove his family to sanctuary in Vermont: “Compassion is giving someone a piece of bread. Solidarity is going with them on the journey.” I’ve embraced this journey. ■

Kris Chupp, 1945 West 22nd Place, Chicago, Ill. 60608.



Then I looked again at all the injustice that goes on in this world. The oppressed were crying, and no one would help them. No one would help them, because their oppressors had power on their side. —
Ecclesiastes 4:1

by Gay Freeman

At Rocky Flats

Being asked to write as a woman involved in resistance work initiates much soul-searching. I haven't thought of myself in those terms. I am a teacher wanting children to feel good about themselves, respect life and have choices. And I find myself at the gates of Rocky Flats, in senators' offices, at rallies and vigils, in Nicaragua and the Philippines in hopes that all of us can have the freedom to make our own choices and respect life.

The Sunday afternoon trek to Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant has become a special ritual in the past eight years. It's hard to put into words what happens: we gather to accept, weep, rejoice, sing, share and pray together, a time to face the beauty of God's creation and the ugliness of our preparations to destroy it. The prayers lead us to Catholic Worker soup kitchens, refugee work, Pledge of Resistance activities, courtrooms, El Salvador, Guatemala, Japan and Germany.

I'm not quite sure how I got involved. I am a fairly quiet, obedient person attracted to the Mennonite church by communities of caring people living out peace and justice in the world. In 1978 a group crossed the fence at Rocky Flats and camped on the railroad tracks in the rain, hail, wind and snow. A friend invited me to be part of the information table. A train came and I was arrested. It felt right to be present at Rocky Flats yet I have a great internal struggle in courtrooms where I feel no longer a human being.

Part of the continuing struggle is what it means to be a woman in the Mennonite church where I feel boxed into "liberal," "non-ethnic," "woman," "radical." Much of my energy comes from sisters and brothers around the world as they and we seek freedom from the prevalent North American "white male" system of power, weapons and money. Philippine and Nicaraguan women have helped me

get in touch with my oppression and my oppressing. We need to connect with each other so we can move into new ways of being where all people are free and none "used." ■

Gay Freeman, 10341 West 59th Ave. #3, Arvada, Colo. 80004.

by Dorothy Friesen

A "Peaches and Cream Lady"

I coordinate a grassroots interfaith justice action network in Chicago called SYNAPSES. Our "office-home" is located in a Mexican working class community where drugs and gangs abound. Street witness and civil disobedience actions which carry the threat of arrest are a regular part of my life. In the past year I have been arrested twice for public witness against U.S. militarism in Central America.

How did a "nice Mennonite Brethren girl" from Winnipeg end up like this? It was a natural step-by-step process which isn't over yet. I am only 37 years old and only the Holy Spirit knows where else she will lead. My resistance to U.S. militarism grows directly from my religious upbringing and my experience in Asia on an MCC assignment.

Taking the Bible literally means having to confront the strong thread of a justice ethic running through both Old and New Testaments. When I graduated from university, I assumed that direct obedience to these demands would mean some kind of social work. However, as I worked with juvenile delinquents in Ontario and with poor Appalachian whites and poor blacks in Elkhart, Ind, it slowly dawned on me that these "helping industries," like welfare and Medicare, only exacerbated the problems. In corporate America, jobs and dignity for the people I knew were non-existent. I was pushed by my friendships with women on welfare to thoroughly question the profit system as a way to order society.

The years spent in the Philippines with MCC not only

"The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives." —Isaiah 58:6-7

**That is what the wicked are like. They have plenty and are always getting more.
—Psalm 73:12**

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reinforced these suspicions about the economic system, it also shook me to the core emotionally. Friends were tortured, killed, disappeared for asserting their rights as human beings. And always this statement by the victim's family followed: "She/he was killed by a gun supplied by your country." But the suffering was coupled with struggle and a bigger-than-life selflessness on the part of the Filipinos who joined the people's movement for justice and peace.

While I will always treasure the emotional and economic education I received in the Philippines, I knew that my work was in North America as a part of a community of resistance to the destruction and havoc created by U.S. government policies around the globe.

It took years to re-enter this society, and I passed through a black hole depression as I came face to face with the alienation of life here. The story of Elijah, asking to die

7,000 people in Israel who had not bowed down to Baal. There are at least that many in America.

One of the federal officers who dragged me out of the post office after we had a "die-in" on Tax Day said to me later with a confused look, "You just seem like a peaches and cream lady."

"Well, I am," I replied, "but even peaches and cream ladies have to put their bodies on the line against death and destruction in our names."

Many of us see and feel the injustice, but we are steeped in the female stereotype of "being nice." One of my hopes is that young women especially can be challenged and nurtured to build their skills and confidence, to confront evil directly and boldly.

The rewards of this work are not monetary. I can spend my energies this way because I am part of a long-term



because he is the only one left who cares about Yahweh's commands, resonated deeply.

But in spite of my own self-doubt and weakness, the Spirit has been at work, building a group of people who work and pray together. For years we prayed each morning and lit a candle for the people of Nicaragua. It seemed only natural last June when the congressional vote on aid to the contras came up that we bring our prayers into the public forum. We held our morning prayers about the illegal disturbance that the United States was causing in Nicaragua in the revolving doors of the Federal Building. We were arrested, removed and charged with (irony of ironies) "illegal disturbance."

I was found guilty, fined, and now have a federal record. Somehow that experience opened the door to stronger and more sustained resistance. While I have certainly been apprehensive about engaging in acts where I might get hurt and I have been afraid of the legal process because I know so little about it, the fact that there are thousands around the country involved in resistance encourages me. The fact that there are hundreds in Chicago who act together strengthens me. God's word to Elijah was that there were

General Conference Voluntary Service unit. Sharing decisions, income, a vehicle and other necessities has helped me to become more disciplined and to live more simply and directly. Living in a poor community, subjected to the violence and pain of the streets and acting persistently against the growing militarism of the state has functioned as a kind of spiritual formation program. During the past five years I have begun to think and act collectively. Yet, paradoxically, through this social vision, my internal strength as an individual has been sharpened.

The greatest paradox, however, is the theological/spiritual shift that has happened almost imperceptibly over the past years. The dominant religious motif right now is the responsibility of being co-creator with God of a new heaven and a new earth. At the same time, I have come to a deeper sense of surviving only by the grace of God. While I began the journey through literal reading of the Bible and a certain Mennonite Brethren missionary zeal, I continue the journey because it's fun and it's fulfilling. ■

Dorothy Friesen, 1821 W. Cullerton, Chicago, Ill. 60608.



The Lord gave this message to Zechariah: "Long ago I gave these commands to my people: 'You must see that justice is done, and must show kindness and mercy to one another. Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners who live among you or anyone else in need. And do

not plan ways of harming one another.'

"But my people stubbornly refused to listen. They closed their minds and made their hearts as hard as rock."
—Zechariah 7: 8-12.

By Lois Kenagy

A Lifetime Commitment

My friend Barbara is challenging a conservative Republican congressman in the November election. I am opposing an incumbent county commissioner.

"Why are we foolish enough to challenge incumbents?" I asked Barbara.

"Because we're women of conviction and we love a challenge," was her reply.

My life experiences have been enriched because of the love of a challenge, as well as because I am a person of deep conviction. In 1954, barely 21, I travelled to post-war Europe with MCC. My term included about two years working with Mennonite refugees who were stranded in Germany after fleeing the Soviet Union. Their trauma, their wisdom, their faith which had been strengthened by testing and suffering affected me immeasurably.

During the Vietnam War years I had deep concern for young men conscientiously opposed to participation in the military who because of their lack of connection with the Historic Peace Churches frequently were not recognized as conscientious objectors. Serving as a draft counselor provided me with the opportunity of helping young men develop and articulate their own personal convictions against war.

Since the birth of our first child in 1958 I have not been employed outside the home or farm. The seasonal demands of our farm—I manage the strawberry harvest—and the responsibility of being the support person for Clif and earlier for the children as they worked long hours on the farm made full-time work outside the home impossible. But in these busy years there has been discretionary time for volunteer work in church and community.

The volunteer work has covered a variety of subject matter. But all of it has shared a common theme: building shalom, fleshing out the essence of God's love and care for people and for the earth itself.

My farmer-husband sensitized me to the loss of fertile farmland, rapidly being used up by haphazard development. Together we participated in Oregon's process of establishing statewide goals for farm land preservation. We have continued land use work for more than a decade, monitoring decisions, providing testimony and instituting legal appeals as necessary. My part of the teamwork has been to focus on the political arena, testifying at both state and local hearings.

In the early 70's new winds were blowing in the church. Women's gifts were recognized and I was invited to chair our district conference's new Peace and Justice Committee. This assignment has empowered me, providing a base for my peace and justice work within the church. Much of the committee effort has been educational, attempting to provide information to our churches and members about war taxes, the arms race, international issues, hunger, and criminal justice, including the death penalty and Victim Offender Reconciliation Programs.

There are lots of downers. The effort feels so huge, the results so miniscule or sometimes even counterproductive. My church family is at times supportive, but at times I feel as if they write me off. Without them I could not continue; with them I sometimes despair. The greatest joy and the deepest pain happens for me in the context of the church. Love and acceptance are there but the feelings of being rejected also arise sporadically. God's grace is the constant factor.

Ongoing and unswerving support has come from my husband and from a small group of women who have been together for many years. They have provided counsel, encouragement, admonition, but above all, love, acceptance and intercession. I know God has called me to a ministry of peacemaking. I know God's love surrounds and empowers me. Entry now into the political arena provides new direction. But the core, the overarching goal, continues. I want to participate in God's work in the world, to build shalom. ■

Lois Kenagy, 1911 N.E. Pax Place, Corvallis, Oregon 97330

This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our neighbors! If a rich person sees a neighbor in need, yet closes his heart against this neighbor, how can the rich person claim to love God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk, it must be true love, which shows itself in action. —1 John 3:16-18

And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your
God. —Micah 6:8

by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Parenting for Justice

"And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." It sounds like such a simple mandate, but I have begun to realize the complexities and costs inherent in it.

Mothering is presently the major divestment/investment of my energy. Together with my husband, I am seeking to discern how best to parent three young children. Questions of justice and resistance emerge frequently as one deals with the demands of parenting—teaching cooperation, exhibiting fairness, maintaining a balance of trust and caution.

We live in a small and very homogenous community that often seems to live as though the rest of the world does not matter. Its wealth and prosperity effectively hide the suffering and poverty that exists here. In trying to expand our children's world and encourage in them a spirit of compassion, we have over the last four years befriended a mentally handicapped and lonely man who has become an important part of our family. At least once a week and on special occasions we include him in our family life. We notice that our children are free of the barriers and impatience that we struggle with.

We daily meet all kinds of challenges in parenting. Our decision to simplify eating habits and eliminate meat prompted me several years ago to form a food coop. This has given us easier access to the food we need and also helps us support local food producers. We have tried to develop and use our purchasing habits to show our responsibility to and implications in unjust situations.

Only two months ago our third child was born and we chose to have him at home. Our intention was not to make a political statement or draw attention in any way, but rather to make the birth experience the best possible one for our entire family, for our new baby and for myself. But

after Justin's birth, we became more aware of the political implications. We have been victimized by the medical profession. We have surrendered the right over our bodies and over the whole birthing process to a male-dominated medical profession. We have, in a sense, been tricked into forfeiting what is rightly ours.

When we moved to this community five years ago, we were very much aware of our proximity to a huge nuclear arsenal. We sit just north of the North Dakota border where 300 MX missiles are planted and ready for instantaneous destruction. Our concern about the ways we prepare for, accept and even expect war caused Brian and I to undertake editing a newsletter, *Tumbleweed*, which seeks to raise awareness as well as connect people around the province who share similar concerns for peace.

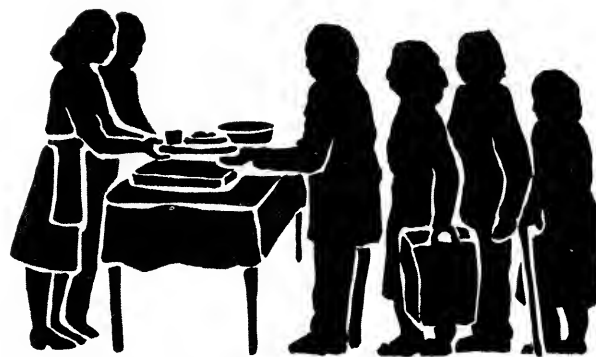
Micah 6:8—simple, yet not so simple. We count the cost sometimes when we realize we are misunderstood and when we find ourselves on the fringe in our community. It recently cost us our position as teachers at a Mennonite church school. And it is complex. We are deacons in a church that is struggling with the issue of ordaining women. I am convinced that it is a justice issue, but I am also aware of the pain on both sides of the issue. Ordaining women becomes no less right or urgent, but there is the additional concern for process. How does one proceed without alienating? Justice and resistance work often call us to be a healing presence, but sometimes we feel it leads us into the business of creating enemies. ■

Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Box 1622, Altona, Manitoba R0G 0B0

Jesus looked at his disciples and said,
"Happy are you poor;
the Kingdom of God is yours!
"Happy are you who are hungry
now;
you will be filled!
"But how terrible for you who
are rich now;
you have had your easy life!

"How terrible for you who are
full now;
you will go hungry!
"How terrible for you who laugh
now;
you will mourn and weep!"

—Luke 6:20-25



to know that most great social achievements, whether it be women's suffrage, the abolition of slavery or the right to decent working conditions, were not achieved through education but rather through resistance which grew out of awareness. I was anxious to put my awareness into action.

My friendship with street people and poor neighbors provided the catalyst for justice work. I would get up at 2 a.m. to dig through dumpsters behind grocery stores because of my neighbors urgent situation in Washington, D.C. In Columbia several of us spent a lot of energy getting one elderly street person into a nursing home. We had to "advocate" our way to the head of Missouri's social services to get a competency hearing. That took six months.

I can't work for justice without letting the oppressed radicalize my life. I'm uncomfortable as a participant of such a consumption-oriented society knowing people who live in cardboard boxes. It's like eating a sandwich in front of a hungry person. My goal is to become as much as possible like the people with whom I work and to lead a life of quality, not quantity.

I also realized that I would only resist when I or my friends felt directly threatened by injustice. I first became involved in resistance because I personally was affected by the terrorism of the threat of nuclear annihilation. This same threat has brought many middle- and upper-class people to do resistance.

Later, I became involved in resistance at the Community of Creative Non-Violence in an effort to protect our shelter, our community and our work. One incident in particular stands out in my mind. Last summer in Washington, D.C. we had a court case related to the shelter. Several homeless people were among the defendants. The courtroom quickly filled that first morning as many homeless people and their supporters filed in. The rest of the people (about 100 of us) were told we would have to wait—not in the lobby, not in the hall, not in the park at the building entrance, but rather on the sidewalk of Constitution Avenue. We were in a *public* federal courthouse.

Furthermore, security guards began to bar people from the entrance of the building. But not all people, just the ones who looked homeless. Our well-dressed supporters walked in freely. People in three-piece suits entered without questions. Those who weren't dressed so nicely, including some defendants, were barred from the building.

Those of us in the hall refused to leave. We just stood there quietly. Others in our group decided that if some couldn't

by Beth Preheim

Awareness Into Action

To celebrate my 23rd birthday, I went to the Strategic Air Command Headquarters on Armed Forces Day, May 17. SAC personnel plan all targets and strategies for nuclear weapons. SAC was also celebrating its birthday, having been created 40 years ago shortly after the atomic bombings of Japan. I was joined by another woman who had just turned 72. We delivered birthday cards and were detained and processed for unlawfully re-entering (we had both been previously detained) the Offut Air Force Base.

Two years ago I crossed that very same line in my first act of resistance. Since then I've been involved in the resistance movement and have worked with the homeless in hospitality houses in Columbia, Mo. and with the Community for Creative Non-Violence in Washington, D.C.

I now live in Omaha, Neb. in a Catholic Worker community. We run a soup kitchen and daytime drop-in center for the hungry and homeless. In addition, I work at the Center for Non-violent Studies, editing the *Midwest Resistance Newsletter*, doing press work and organizing for groups involved in resistance actions.

The seeds for this kind of work were planted long ago. My parents both did service and social justice work in our community and overseas with MCC. I grew up very aware of justice issues. While going to school and attending a Mennonite college, I sensed that "enlightened, educated" people like myself weren't going to feed the hungry or win human rights by our awareness alone. I had read enough

• Resources

- ***Sisters of a Common Thread.*** Thirty-minute slide show combining music, poetry, facts and photography to tell the stories of Asian, African, Latin American and North American women. The hardships which women face globally are seen as unique yet universal, as all are threatened by militarization. The slide

show points to the hope and joy that are part of the experience of women joining hands in a common struggle for justice. Written and produced by Dorothy Friesen. Available for rent (\$10) or purchase (\$75) from Jubilee Crafts, 300 W. Apsley, Philadelphia, Pa. 19144. Phone (215) 849-0808.

- ***Day, Dorothy. The Long Loneliness. The Autobiography of Dorothy Day.*** Harper and Row Publishers. 1952. Dorothy Day's own story of helping to found the Catholic Worker movement which combines day-to-day religious faith with direct action.

- ***Cantarow, Ellen. Moving the Mountain. Women Working for Social Change. The Feminist Press.*** 1980. Presents the stories of three women: Florence Luscomb who worked for suffrage, labor and peace; Ella Baker organizing for civil rights; Jessie Lopez de la Cruz organizing for farmworkers' rights.

enter due to the way they were dressed, no one could come in. Several people locked arms and barred the door. The security guards responded with force, physically prying people from the doors. They tore one defendant's ligaments as they dragged her across the ground. Finally they gave up and allowed us to quietly stand in the hall throughout the hearing.

Middle-class people don't often feel the urgency to resist because their personal rights aren't trampled on so blatantly and frequently. We resist when we feel our community, our friends, our work or our own person are in direct jeopardy.

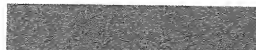
In this experience of spontaneous resistance at the courthouse, I witnessed the power of people bonding together. I have come to realize that I can only sustain a life's work of justice and resistance through community. Working with oppressed people takes its toll because oppression breeds violence. Violence tests the limits of non-violence. Resistance does as well because it may involve a confrontational situation. Community provides a safety valve for such pressures. In addition, living in community is a more just way of using resources. Last year I was able to live on about \$2,000 and avoid paying war taxes.

On the other hand, community members challenge me to continue resistance while the state tries to deter me by imposing stiffer penalties each time. That is scary.

A crucial part of being a just person is to see how all oppression is connected and thus feel compassion for all people. I can very easily connect my work with homeless people and my resistance to nuclear weapons. I can make connections between sexual violence and the militaristic attitude in this country. Third World dirty politics are tied to cuts in social services. From the farm crisis to racial inequality to the immorality of the military to the victimizing of a capitalist win/lose society, all oppression is linked together. The most important thing is that I make those connections, pick a part of the chain to break apart and trust others will do their part. ■

Beth Preheim, 1715 J Creighton Blvd., Omaha, Neb. 68111

by Melita Rempel



A Women's Advocate

I work as a community chaplain in Limberlost Subsidized Housing Complex in London, Ontario. Most of my time is spent with the women in the community.

Several years ago when I worked as an advocate for prisoners and their families in Louisiana, the oppressor was easy to identify: I wrote lots of letters to "correctional" officials, recruited attorneys, helped organize the Religious Leaders Against the Death Penalty, joined demonstrations against the death penalty, jailhouse beatings and Reaganomics, and visited men and women who were locked inside the prisons.

The oppressors of Limberlost tenants are less clearly definable. Government assistance programs, education and recreation subsidies, and donations of food and clothes ensure that survival needs are met. Unfortunately this well meaning but often empty charity does not give tenants dignity and self-respect. Sometimes I feel guilty that I haven't attacked the discrimination the tenants face. Instead I am trying to listen more, and find ways to empower the tenants to take control of their lives. In some small ways this is happening: several women participated in a National Anti-Poverty Organization meeting; networks of tenants are helping one another in sharing information, transportation, childcare and job possibilities.

Because I am hired on a 60 percent basis at Limberlost, I am able to spend one day a week working for MCC on the Domestic Violence Task Force. This task force is concerned about how our churches can become more helpful in the healing process of victims and abusers. Through this work I understand more fully the struggle of some Limberlost women when they tell me what it feels like to be constantly put down and humiliated in front of friends, to have hamburger smashed in one's face and to be slapped and pushed around. I feel the struggle between their love and hate, their attraction and repulsion, their feelings of hope and guilt.



Happy are those who are
concerned for the poor;
the Lord will help them when
they are in trouble.

—Psalm 41:1

The seeds of domestic violence lie in the roles, structure and symbols of our culture which perpetuate the dominance/submission relationships between men and women. We are all entitled to wholeness and fulfillment in our lives and in our relationships. By supporting a movement towards justice for the families in Limberlost and the victims and abusers of domestic violence, I hope to be faithful to God's promise for a redeemed humanity. ■

Melita Rempel, 575 Ridout Street, #11N, London, Ontario N6A 2R2

by Hedy Sawatsky

Civil Disobedience or Divine Obedience?

Pentacost Sunday 1986 epitomizes my life in its richness and variety. The day begins by celebrating in a nearby church with mostly Hispanics. What a surprise to be joined by my favorite (next to Jesus, I tell her) friend. Her enlightening book has just been released: *Blessed Assurance. At Home with the Bomb in Amarillo, Texas*. Grace also joins us in an afternoon Peace Pentecost prayer service at Pantex, the final assembly plant for all nuclear weapons in the United States. Then curiosity leads me to view the Texas Sesquicentennial Wagon Train. I arrive home just in time for Silent Meeting. The day closes as friends and I plan for participation in a non-violent direct action at the Nevada Test Site in June.

A somewhat unusual day for a 56-year-old Canadian who calls herself an Anabaptist Mennonite Christian? Possibly. The story of the journey can only touch on a few capsulized vignettes.

I remember learning the Beatitudes in an (old) Mennonite Church and memorizing part of Acts 2 in German in my home church in Vineland. Deepening awareness of God's call came via exposure to Women in Church Vocations at Bethel (Kans.) College and during two years at Mennonite

Biblical Seminary. For eight years I learned and taught in church and schools in Vineland until the next port of call: overseas.

What an eye-opening and life-affecting experience were those two years as a relief worker with MCC in Jordan and Jerusalem: a new culture and warm-hearted Palestinians who still suffer injustice and homelessness in the name of religion. Even now I hear the haunting plea of a dear Palestinian sister: "Hedy, go home and work for peace; help stop the violence at its roots."

The struggle to be faithful to the Light was supported by others and enabled the "plunge" to divest and live simply (below taxable level), having no job security but trusting God. (After 11 years, I laud the faithfulness of our Lord!)

Then for three years as life was in transition, three strands intermingled: advocacy with the poor in Elkhart together with "meine teure Schwester" Dorothy Friesen; seminary refresher courses in Biblical peacemaking; and apprenticeship in various non-violent resistance witnesses.

Thus I grappled—academically, spiritually and experientially—with: What are the connections between poverty and militarism? What does the risk of the cross mean? Is non-resistance alone an appropriate witness to Christ in a nuclear age? I discerned that for me to be true to our historic peace stance, non-resistance must include deep compassion, risks and non-violent resistance. And I discovered that when I ACTED ON THAT WHICH I ALREADY KNEW TO BE TRUTH, more light came. Praise God! That's dynamic Christian education.

Case in point: Lent 77 and an invitation to be part of a Holy Week peace witness at the Pentagon. Inner turmoil. Fears for my image. Frustrated with no clarity, I fasted and prayed. During that week, peace and a sense of rightness about going surfaced. Later that same year in Advent, when planning to do so-called "civil disobedience" (divine obedience), I was miraculously protected in a serious car accident precipitated by a drunken driver. It seemed clear that Yahweh was graciously guiding.

Next venture: intentional community. The way led to Colorado where fellow Mennonites Mary, Pedro and I joined others in Assistance (to the poor) and Resistance (peacemaking). "Love even the enemy," "Security in God, not the Bomb" were our messages to those involved at the Rocky Flats Weapons Plant and other military installations. Symbolic actions helped us say yes to life and no to death.



We have been beaten, jailed, and mobbed; we have been overworked and have gone without sleep or food. We are honored and disgraced; we are insulted and praised. We are treated as liars, yet we speak the truth; as unknown, yet we are known by all; as though we were dead, but, as you see, we live on. Although punished, we

are not killed, although saddened, we are always glad; we seem poor, but we make many people rich; we seem to have nothing, yet we really possess everything." —2 Corinthians 6:5,8-10

As we spent time in jail we began to comprehend more deeply the call to "free the prisoner" and "visit (be with) those in prison." In the courtroom we rejoiced in the promise of God that the Holy Spirit assists when one appears before the authorities.

Three years ago I was invited to move to Amarillo as part of a presence for peace in the shadow of the Pantax Plant, where trains, trucks and planes transport death "hardware" to and from all parts of the country. Following the active contemplative vocation, I am joined to others in a growing Agape community, seeking to maintain a prayerful presence in the area. Part of our common calling is based on the "watcher" concept of Ezekial 33.

We share aspirations and inspiration with communities as far distant as Bangor, Wash. and Comer, Ga. Gratefully we sense the Holy Spirit's empowerment in our task of seeking first God's Kingdom and righteousness.

"Hamdulilah" (Thanks be to God), as my Palestinian friends would have it. ■

Hedy Sawatsky, Route 3, Box 430, Amarillo, Texas 79108

by Mary Sprunger-Froese

Part of a Misfit Remnant

I work with a Catholic Mennonite mix of people living in a community to which I'm financially and decision-makingly interdependent. We run three "houses of hospitality," a soup kitchen and drop-in center and make efforts at resisting the militarism that feeds and pervades this home for the Air Force Academy, Peterson Air Force Base, NORAD, Fort Carson and a host of high tech industries dependent on military contracts. We count on the larger extended "peace community" in all this work

and are nurtured by their partnership, as well as leadership, in efforts with the poor and peacemaking.

Peter and I joined the Bijou community seven years ago, seeking to connect the biblical "option for the poor" and mandate for making peace through life with a small group of kindred spirits. It's good to be part of a misfit remnant that offers glimmers of hope and meaning in the midst of individualism and profit-making.

During and after college international students educated me to some of the economic and political implications of the American way of life on poverty in their countries. I learned that the United States funded and trained torture groups. By living in households with friends who had international experience (Rebecca Yoder, Tom Rutschman) and who challenged me on lifestyle and war tax payment, I was (lovingly!) nudged me into new awareness of how my choices affected others' opportunities. My parents encouraged service. Gerald and Mary Hope Stucky, missionaries in Colombia, were spiritual parents in their faithful example of continuing to question and to be open to change and growth. At seminary, Millard Lind's assertion that worship is political—a pledge of allegiance—confirmed my suspicions that nation-states and their laws are often at odds with God's ways and that Yahweh's politics stand in judgement of every human structure and system.

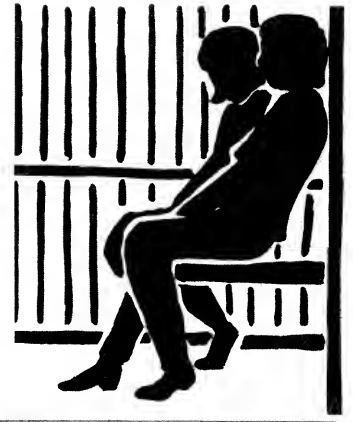
Experiencing church as community—being loved, challenged, counselled and called upon by companion strugglers—no doubt was the grace through which my path evolved. Partnership with Peter, also a grace that has come via the faith community, has involved a short stay with his family in Saskatchewan and our life in Colorado Springs. (I'm 36 years old; before my year at seminary I worked as a secretary at Mennonite Board of Missions and then at Elkhart County Home.)

Our Bijou community does odd jobs to pay our bills: lawn and yard work, house painting, cleaning jobs, commercial art work. We charge according to our needs and the person's income and always have enough.

In our local peace vigils and demonstrations we often deliberately choose women as spokespeople. And often it is women who do a large part of the planning and coordinating. I believe this is especially necessary in a military community where sexism is so basic to the mindset

"Do not follow the majority when they do wrong or when they give testimony that perverts justice." —Exodus 23:2

Yet your compatriots say, "The way of the Lord is not just." But it is their way that is not just. —Ezekiel 33:17



of defense, superiority and attack. We must model an alternative to the many *men* who make decisions about this city and its role in U.S. policy.

A flexible schedule, non-payment of war taxes, the comfort and security we as a community feel to each other and our commitment to our work, the riches of people with whom we work and play, dialogue with our opponents: these are some of the joys of my life. Difficulties arise in choosing which issues to confront, which endeavors to focus on and in maintaining hope amidst indications that poverty (of spirit, mind and body) is escalating. Salvation by the Bomb as a pervasive ideology is reducing people to robot-like responses.

My work deepens my faith in what Jesus was about, in what he invited people to live out—yes, people can together live the rule of God, here and now. The work I'm part of is central, I believe, to the bringing together of all things in Christ. (Ephesians 1:10) ■

Mary Sprunger-Froese, 235 E. Fountain Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colo. 80903

by Ann Zook

A Peace Do-er

I am the mother of four adult children and the grandmother of four young children. I live with my husband, Al, just east of downtown Denver right beside the Catholic Worker Soup Kitchen in a section of Denver called Five Points. We chose to live in this area because of our participation with the soup kitchen and to experience in a token way the reality of the poor.

For the past three and a half years I have been working for an agency that provides home health care for the elderly and allows me to work part time. I am always questioning myself which is more important—spending my time with

these dear elderly people or on issues directly related to peace and justice and participating with resistance activities.

This past year my husband has been more physically involved with direct action, making it necessary for me to be the breadwinner. Being able to be involved with the elderly is a real blessing to me. I am sure many of you are aware of the Reagan budget cuts the elderly are heavily suffering. They feel rejected, lose their self-worth and believe themselves to be a burden to society. A good number of my patients, when discharged from the agency because Medicare will no longer carry them, are helpless; I am able to continue serving them on my own time.

I'm a member of a group that vigils at the entrance gate of Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons plant each Sunday afternoon. Rocky Flats makes all the plutonium triggers for the nuclear bombs in the U.S. arsenal.

At times all of this seems so hopeless, so futile—the warmaking continues, budget cuts continue to be made, the elderly are turned away, college students are losing student aid. I will never forget the evening our teen-age daughter was watching the news and suddenly said, before going to her room, "The news is too depressing; I can't watch this. What is my future?" It is these realities that continually keep me going back to Rocky Flats, spending the night in the governor's office asking him not to send the Colorado National Guard to Honduras.

If I hope to see justice make a start with our young people, with the elderly, with my children and grandchildren, I must try to live in the present—taking one day at a time, striving to take advantage of opportunities to relate and to be a peace do-er. ■

Ann Zook, 2408 Welton, Denver, Colo. 80205

• Women In Ministry

- *Pauline Kennel* has been invited to serve as minister of the Chicago Area Mennonites for the next three years.
- Eleven women were among the 38 students who received Masters of Divinity degrees at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in 1986: *Eleanor Beachy*, who serves as co-pastor with her husband, *Perry*, of Berghal Mennonite Church in

Pawnee Rock, Kan.; *Joan Carolyn Blatz*, who is doing further seminary studies; *Janet M. Breneman* who is taking part in the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education program in Chicago; *Terri Enns* of Fresno, Calif., whose plans are pending; *Sharon K. Gehman*, plans pending, of Mifflinburg, Pa.; *Elisabeth Joy Gingrich* of Freeport, Ill., who is looking for a position as hospital chaplain; *Brenda Martin Hurst*, who with husband, *Ray*, is co-pastor of Tabor Mennonite Church,

Newton, Kan.; *Nancy Kerr*, a teaching elder at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.; *Doris Rempel*, who has become pastor of Hope Mennonite Church in North Battleford, Sask.; *Bonita Weber-Lehman*, now residing in Richmond, Va. and a member of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church; *Doris Weber*, a member of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ontario. *Doris* also serves on the Board of Overseers of Goshen Biblical Seminary.

- East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church commissioned *Ise H. Yoder* as pastoral elder in April.
- *Marie M. S. Chen* has been ordained a pastor in the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan and chaplain of Mennonite Christian Hospital. This is a first for the Mennonite Church in Taiwan.

Letters

- I have just today heard about your publication and would very much like to be put on your mailing list. I understand that in a back issue you dealt with the subject of divorce and a number of other topics that interest me. I wonder if you might send me copies of back issues that are available?

I am teaching a crisis counselling course in a Christian college and I would like to be able to show the class what the Mennonite Central Committee is thinking and doing about the issues that often bring women to crisis centers. I am also a marriage and family counsellor and run a support group for divorced persons.

As a feminist, divorced, non-traditional Mennonite Brethren, I am very excited to hear what Mennonite women are doing. I have been away from the Mennonite church since I was a teen-ager so I am just reconnecting myself. I am looking forward to hearing from you!

—Wendy Peters, Winnipeg, Manitoba

News and Verbs

- Three members of Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church are participating in the Great Peace March, a cross-country walk from California to Washington, D.C. They are *Donna Williams* and *Dawn and Kent Friesen*.
- Learning from the Native American church in Arizona and New Mexico is a purpose of a nine-day tour being led by *Pearl Janzen* of Reedley, Calif. Sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church, it is taking place Oct. 22-30.

- *Elizabeth Hostetler* has been named director of a new Bluffton (Ohio) College arts center, named The Lion and the Lamb. The center is the only one in the nation to have a distinctive emphasis on peace education for children through the arts.

- There are more than 500 million illiterate women in Third World countries, and 129 colleges have decided to help change that statistic. The colleges, all of them affiliated with Catholic women's religious orders, have begun a joint project to help Third World women fight poverty through education.

- "Kwonsas"—experienced deaconesses—have helped make Korean congregations the fastest growing ethnic churches in the United States. From a handful 40 years ago, there are 1,500 Korean congregations today. Kwonsas are usually elderly women with grown children who help lead weekday Bible studies, evangelize and visit church members who are sick, shut-in or in need of spiritual encouragement.

- *Mary Louise Hooley* has been appointed a faculty member in the Goshen (Ind.) College music department. She holds a masters degree in music from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

- Goshen College has announced the appointment of *Lori Owen* as a faculty member in the communications department. *Lori* expects to receive a masters degree from Michigan State University in East Lansing.

- *Sylvia Jantz* is the first person hired to serve as coordinator of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the Mennonite Church. She will work alongside her husband, *Wally*, who is conference minister, from their home in Monument, Colo.

- Among those elected to board posts of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada this past summer were: *Debbie Martin Koop*, Montreal, Quebec and *Helen Unrau*, Hamilton, Ontario, to the Congregational Resources Board; *Ruth Friesen*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Native Ministries Board; *Mary Mae Schwartzentruber*, Kitchener, Ontario, to the Committee on Ministerial Leadership; *Esther Epp-Tiessen*, Kitchener, Ontario, to MCC Canada; and *Anna Ens*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Commission on Overseas Mission.

- In September Bev Suderman became Youth and Assistant Pastor at Vineland (Ontario) United Mennonite Church. She previously worked as archives assistant at the Mennonite Heritage Center.
- Delegates to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's annual meeting voted down ordination of women in less than five minutes with a show of hands. The synod approved a resolution allowing women to serve as officers and as members of boards and committees on the condition that doing so does not violate "the order of creation" by usurping authority over men.
- The United Church of Canada officially approved female imagery for God at its General Council meetings in August. The 31st General Conference also voted to initiate a study of the biblical, liturgical and ecumenical implications of using inclusive language. And a 65-year-old laywoman, Ann Squire of Ottawa, was elected to serve as moderator of the 880,000-member denomination.
- A Women in Ministry Conference is being held Oct. 24-25 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. The main speaker is AMBS faculty member June Alliman Yoder. A variety of workshops are planned. For more information, contact LaJane Yoder at AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, Ind. 46517; phone (219) 295-3726.
- Holiday Inn recently decided to carry "adult" movies in their motel rooms nationwide. Ramada Inn began a porno movie service last fall but discontinued it after receiving several complaints. Recent titles offered by Holiday Inn include "Maid In Sweden," "I Like the Girls Who Do," and "Sensuous Nurse." Concerned individuals may write or call: Michale Rose, Chairman, Holiday Corporation, 1023 Cherry Road, Memphis, Tenn. 38117. The toll-free number is 1-800-HOLIDAY.
- Florence and Otto Driedger of Regina, Saskatchewan were the main speakers in a May conference held in Filadelfia, Paraguay on the topic of "The Service and Duty of the Deacon." More than 300 people attended the seminar, which was sponsored by the German-speaking congregations of the three Mennonite colonies in Chaco.

-----Clip and File-----

A Complete List

MCC Committee on Women's Concerns Reports

1. Aug 1973: Focus on role of women in the church.
2. Oct 1973: Focus on ordination and the minister's wife, the role of women in the Mennonite church.
3. Dec 1973: Restoring wholeness, the Martha-complex.
4. Feb 1974: Study groups on women, the status of widows in the church.
5. Apr 1974: On education
6. Summer 1974: Women, work and the church.
7. Fall 1974: Perspectives on 1974: The implications of interdependence and cooperation.
8. Jan-May 1975: Women's representation on church committees; A single goes to Africa.
9. Oct-Dec 1975: How women fared at three official Mennonite conferences; Reports on task force projects and seminars on women's concerns.
10. Mar-Apr 1976: The "total woman" phenomenon; Experiences as women in the working world; The politics of rape.
11. July 1976: Worship.
12. Dec 1976: Parenthood and childbearing.
13. Feb 1977: Men.
14. May 1977: Media.
15. July 1977: Language.
16. Sept 1977: Rape.
17. Nov 1977: Third world women.
18. Feb 1978: The auxiliary syndrome.
19. Apr-May 1978: Women in ministry.
20. June-July 1978: Black women and the church.
21. Aug-Sept 1978: Women and careers.
22. Oct-Nov 1978: Women and world conference.
23. Dec 1978: Family violence, Pt. I.
24. Jan 1979: Family violence, Pt. II.
25. Mar-Apr 1979: Women and power.
26. July 1979: Native Americans.
27. Aug 1979: New men, new roles.
28. Nov-Dec 1979: The child.
29. Jan-Feb 1980: Women in the speaking ministry of the church.
30. Mar-Apr 1980: Returned missionary women.
31. May-June 1980: Mennonite women and depression.
32. July-Aug 1980: Follow up focus on Native Americans: Canadians.
33. Sept-Oct 1980: Women in leadership.
34. Nov-Dec 1980: Women in Mennonite business/industry.
35. Jan-Feb 1981: Women and militarism.
36. Mar-Apr 1981: Mentoring for and by women.
37. May-June 1981: Ministry of writing.
38. July-Aug 1981: Minister's spouse.
39. Sept-Oct 1981: Discipleship motives in career choices.
40. Nov-Dec 1981: Focus on singleness and single parenting.
41. Jan-Feb 1982: Women and health.
42. Mar-Apr 1982: Language: Inclusiveness.
43. May-June 1982: Ordination.
44. July-Aug 1982: Sexuality and God's Kingdom.
45. Sept-Oct 1982: Peace and the power of one woman.
46. Nov-Dec 1982: Two-career marriages.
47. Jan-Feb 1983: Nurturing children; feminist roots—what nurtures their growth?
48. Mar-Apr 1983: Women mystics and the devotional life.
49. May-June 1983: Women and the word: the interpretative intrigue.
50. July-Aug 1983: Ten-Year Celebration of CWC.
51. Sept-Oct 1983: Women's experiences in non-traditional Mennonite churches.
52. Nov-Dec 1983: Women and aging.
53. Jan-Feb 1984: Mennonite women and home missions.
54. Mar-Apr 1984: Third World women.
55. May-June 1984: Childbearing/childlessness.
56. July-Aug 1984: Friendship and community.
57. Sept-Oct 1984: Women and poverty.
58. Nov-Dec 1984: Women and body image.
59. Jan-Feb 1985: Black women and feminism.
60. Mar-Apr 1985: Women and the special child.
61. May-June 1985: Women's development: a critique of existing theory.
62. July-Aug 1985: Mothers and daughters.
63. Sept-Oct 1985: Women and decision-making in Mennonite institutions.
64. Jan-Feb 1986: Women, pornography and violence.
65. Mar-Apr 1986: Women, men and housework.
66. May-June 1986: Divorce and the church.
67. July-Aug 1986: Women, choice and lifestyle.

-----Clip and File-----

• **Future Report topics** being planned include women and prisons, women in politics, women who leave the Mennonite church and those who stay to work for change, farm women in crisis, domestic violence, disabled women and Mennonite women in the arts. **Compilers and/or writers are needed for some of these issues.** We are especially looking for the names of women who have left the Mennonite church due to its

treatment of women and who are willing to share their stories. If you would like to contribute, if you have ideas regarding the shaping of any of these topics or if you can supply names of possible writers, please contact Report editor Emily Will.



Illustrations in this issue were drawn by Teresa Pankratz of Chicago. Please do not reproduce without permission.

- **Marilyn Peters Kliever** and her husband, **Werner**, are sharing a full-time position as admissions counselors at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg. Both have studied at CMBS and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. They are the parents of three preschool boys and belong to Jubilee Mennonite Church, Swift Current.
- **Anne Unruh** began duties as Resource Center Manager of Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg last July. Beyond operating the center on a daily basis, she will be available for consultations, seminars and workshops on Christian education topics. Anne is a member of First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg.
- **The General Assembly of the Church of God**, headquartered in Cleveland, Tenn., voted 956-805 to retain rules prohibiting women from voting at its sessions. The issue is expected to come up again at the next assembly in 1988.

REPORT is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *Report* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee

on Women's Concerns.

Correspondence and address changes should be sent to Emily Will, Editor, MCC, Box M, Akron, PA 17501.

U.S. residents may send subscriptions to the above address. Canadian residents may send subscriptions to MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9. A donation of \$6.00 per year per subscription is suggested.

- **MCCer Brenda Stoltzfus** helped organize a national consultation on prostitution June 13-14 in the Philippines. MCC was one of six sponsoring organizations. Three of Brenda's friends, who work as "hospitality women" in Olongapo, attended the conference with her. Their presence affected the nature of the consultation considerably, forcing participants to think of prostitutes as "real people rather than a subject to be discussed with lots of nice theory," Brenda said.
- **Eleanor Loewen** has resigned as education consultant for the Congregational Resources Board of the Conferences of Mennonites in Canada to establish the Ministry Development Centre in Winnipeg, a consulting service in the field of Christian education. Loewen holds a doctorate in higher education administration from Indiana University.
- **Muriel Thiessen Stackley** has been named the new editor of *The Mennonite*, the semimonthly journal of the General Conference Mennonite Church. She succeeds Bernie Wiebe of Winnipeg who served in that position for 10 years. Muriel has been the editor of the denomination's news service in Newton, Kan., the past two years and formerly was an editorial assistant and youth editor of *The Mennonite*. She also edited the *MCC Women's Concerns Report* from 1979-1982.
- **Co-coordinating the Nicaragua office of Witness for Peace** is **Sharon Hostletler**, a Mennonite from Ohio.



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